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HARRY BRYON CORCORAN

AN EXHIBITION OF SCULPTURE

by

H. Byron Corcoran

A Thesis Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
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Approved by

Peter A. Godwin  
Thesis Advisor

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Thesis  
Advisor

Peter Agostini

Oral Examination  
Committee Members

Gilbert F. Goyard

Walter Dobby

Peter Agostini

Walter Barker

January 14, 1969  
Date of Examination

## CATALOGUE

| Media             | Date | Height in Inches<br>Excluding Base |
|-------------------|------|------------------------------------|
| I. Welded Steel   | 1968 | 16 1/2                             |
| II. Welded Steel  | 1968 | 12 3/4                             |
| III. Welded Steel | 1968 | 20                                 |
| IV. Welded Steel  | 1968 | 19 1/2                             |
| V. Welded Steel   | 1968 | 17                                 |

The show on exhibit in the Weatherspoon Gallery at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro from January 10 through January 24, 1969 presents the body of this thesis. The exhibit consists of five pieces of welded steel sculpture. Each has as its starting point the standing female figure.

Welding lends itself to a direct, spontaneous approach. I am free to respond to the results of the shaping process. Form develops from the interaction of idea and material. Since the process is both additive and subtractive no decision is irreversible as in carving. Clay and wax have this characteristic. But the clay or wax figure is not a finished work. Technical problems of firing or casting may result in an unsatisfactory final piece. The change in material may greatly alter the character of the piece. The welded figure is a finished piece and the quality of the form and the surface is the result of the characteristics of the material and the building process. There is an immediacy and continuity of conception and execution not possible in the casting process.

I am concerned with manipulating material and organizing space. The object must exist in space and have a satisfactory relationship with it. But the space, while preexistent and therefore perhaps the more basic element, is inert until articulated by the object. Thus I am primarily concerned with the creation of objects.

My objects are figures with a fullness which suggests

pregnancy. In this I follow a very ancient tradition for, as the Venus of Willendorf demonstrates, from the time he began to make images man has taken pleasure in these curving masses. The pregnant body with its reassuring promise of life carried on through sons still unborn calms the human fear of extinction while the rounded form approximates the circle, the symbol of perfection and continuity.

Elongation of the figure is also a recurrent motif from the Gothic sculptors to El Greco to Lehmbruck and Giacometti. The attenuated form has often been used to express the artist's opinion of man's spiritual condition. The height of my figures is the result of the way I see the figure. Conceptually the leg extends from the calcaneus to the top of the ilium while the body from the clavicle to the head of the femur is included in the torso. Thus the pelvic girdle is part of two systems. I have expressed this dual role by adding approximately the vertical measurement of the pelvic girdle to the femur and half to all of this vertical measurement to the lower rib cage.

The base is an integral part of the sculpture. The pedestal lifts the figure to its proper height just above eye level and emphasizes the elongation and upward thrust of the figure.

I am concerned with the figure as sculptural form.

Therefore, I have omitted the faces and hands which because of their delicacy and detail divert attention from the masses of the body.